

SOL 5b - The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by describing life in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies, with emphasis on how people interacted with their environment to produce goods and services, including examples of specialization and interdependence.

Just as each of the colonies was established for different reasons, life in the three colonial regions differed, too. Let's learn about the differences in **geography, climate, resources, specialization, social life, and political life** of the **Southern colonies**. We will also learn about **interdependence**, or how the Southern colonies depended on other colonies for goods and services.

To the south of the Mid-Atlantic colonies were the Southern colonies. This region was also located between the Appalachian Mountains on the west and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. Its humid climate included mild winters and hot summers. The land of this region included the rolling hills of the Piedmont and the flat land of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Numerous rivers flowed across the area and emptied into good harbors along the Atlantic coast.

Due to the abundance of rich soil, small farms and large farms called **plantations** prospered in the South. Wealthy plantation owners grew huge amounts of cash crops such as tobacco, rice, cotton and indigo. Cash crops were grown to be sold. Other crops were grown to feed a farmer's livestock and family. Because of their size, plantations needed a large, cheap workforce. To solve this problem, southern plantation owners began to use indentured servants and enslaved African Americans to do the backbreaking work in the fields. This region also benefited from natural resources such as rivers, harbors and dense southern forests. These forests provided wood products like lumber, which were used to build homes, businesses, and ships.

Social life in the southern colonies was very different from the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions. There were very few villages, towns or cities. Instead, the plantation was often the center of social and economic activities. In the center of the plantation stood the elaborate **mansion**, or "Big House," which was surrounded by stables, barns, kitchens, and slave quarters. There were also very few schools in the southern colonies. Children were often educated at home by their parents or private tutors. In the area of religion, the **Church of England** became the established church throughout much of the southern colonial region.

The political life of the Southern colonies revolved around the local seat of government called the **county**. Each county set up an area court four times a year to settle community problems. The sheriff was the main officer of the county and was appointed by the Governor of the colony.

The Southern Colonies specialized in agriculture and did not produce everything they needed. These colonies depended on the New England colonies for manufactured goods, including tools and equipment and they depended on the Mid-Atlantic colonies for grains and livestock.

